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## **COUNTDOWN TO YEAR OF SCIENCE – HOW ARE YOU CELEBRATING?** **COPUS participants gear up for nationwide celebration of science in 2009**

ST. PETERSBURG, FL - The Coalition on the Public Understanding of Science (COPUS) is preparing to shine the national spotlight on science in 2009 and beyond. Established in 2007, COPUS is making plans now to celebrate the Year of Science 2009 (YoS09). The goal of this national, year-long celebration of science is to engage the public and improve public understanding about the nature and process of science. COPUS is a grassroots network - composed of more than two hundred participating organizations representing universities, scientific societies, science centers and museums, government agencies, advocacy groups, media, educators, businesses, and industry - formed in response to recent concerns about national scientific literacy.

In concert with the formation of the national coalition, regionally based Hubs are forming in communities from coast to coast, including a tenth Regional Hub that recently formed in Boulder, CO. "I see this Regional Hub as a way for me to connect with others in my community to leverage resources in support of public outreach and sharing of the joy and wonder of the science I am exposed to every day in my work," said Chris McLelland who is serving as liaison for the Boulder Hub to the national network.

COPUS participants are crossing traditional scientific disciplinary boundaries and partnering with others within their communities to develop activities, programs, and special events in support of Year of Science 2009. By working together to coordinate programs and events that explore the overarching YoS09 theme, "How we know what we know," COPUS participants are aiming to engage the general public in dynamic ways that will make science personally meaningful and locally relevant.

YoS09 activities being developed include:

- Free public lectures and programs at museums and science centers;
- Opportunities to spend a day with a scientist or participate in a research project;
- Roundtable discussions about important local science issues;
- Connecting COPUS-affiliated scientists with the K-12 community;
- Creating local Science Cafés; and
- Radio spots, editorials, and on-line resources that highlight the nature and process of science

In addition to ongoing public understanding of science activities, participants are registering their YoS09 events in the COPUS Program and Resource Directory where members of the public can search for resources and activities by topic interest, audience, date, and location. Web 2.0 tools are being developed to help spread the utility of this community directory by making it accessible via interactive online bumper stickers.

COPUS planners have declared 2009 as the Year of Science because it coincides with the anniversary of a number of important events in the history of science, including the 150th anniversary of the publication of *On the Origin of Species* and the 200th anniversary of the birth of its author, Charles Darwin; the 200th anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln, founder of the National Academy of Sciences; the 400th

anniversary of the publication of Johannes Kepler's first two Laws of Planetary Motion; and the 400th anniversary of Galileo's first use of a telescope to study the skies.

This week, representatives of the first ten COPUS Regional Hubs are meeting at the University of South Florida St. Petersburg, FL, to discuss strategies and best practices for community based outreach, ways to celebrate YoS09, and common needs that may be supported by COPUS at the national level.

For more information about COPUS and the Year of Science 2009, please visit:

[www.copusproject.org](http://www.copusproject.org)

[www.yearofscience2009.org](http://www.yearofscience2009.org)

<http://blogs.aibs.org/copus/>

#### *About COPUS*

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